

**Comments by Janice L. Jacobs, Chargé d' Affaires
Embassy of the United States**

**Seminar Closing-out Ceremony
“Strategic Options for Educational Reform”**

Good evening, ladies and gentleman:

It is an honor for the Embassy of the United States to serve as hostess for this event. We are pleased to gather public and private sector personalities to discuss on educational issues. We're convinced that Dominican education will prevail from combined forces from the government, private business, NGOs and international agencies, since there is widespread interest in improving the Dominican educational system.

We appreciate the World Bank for making this seminar a reality, also the Inter American Bank, and the Program for Educational Reform for Latin America and the Caribbean (PREAL). This course was organized by Acción para la Educación Básica, Inc. (EDUCA) and FLACSO, and the Secretariat of Education. We also want to thank the different NGOs and the private sector representatives accompanying us today.

This collaborative spirit is the best way for a country to face the challenges of globalization. Competitiveness in this global economy demands high levels of education.

Everyone here shares the common interest of improving the educational system in the Dominican Republic, to meet the objectives of the agreements signed in Thailand in 1990 and in Chile in 1999. The Dominican educational system is trying to reach the entire school age population, but this goal will be followed by high quality standards.

We are very optimistic to see the effort made by the Secretariat of State of Education in collaborating with international agencies to improve the Dominican educational system. It also fills us with hope to see the response of the organized civil society to the needs of the system.

This seminar is a response to those necessities. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has been offering particular assistance to the Secretariat of Education to focus on the area of technical specialization of evaluation. Fortunately this is a specialty where the cooperation between State and civil society can bear great fruit. Dominican education seeks to achieve total coverage for the school age population, but this goal must be accompanied by ever increasing levels of quality. Quality evaluation on education is a complex process. Information used adequately, will support the decision-making process on resources, teaching and planning for future quality policies.

The course was intended to offer a solid conceptual framework for the analysis of educational reforms, centered on results obtained through work in the classroom. Also to train educators in the management of evaluation indicators which will permit decision making in matters of educational policy.

Another objective is to highlight the evaluation process that can also be used as a tool towards globalization; therefore, we'll appreciate if students are getting basic education attuned with a changing world.

We've proposed to tighten cooperation loops with the education sector. That will require lots of events like this one, where we will examine the challenges and advances of the educational system, and will congregate everyone involved in the strategy and management of education.

You've got the Embassy's support on this international cooperation to achieve a better educational system in the Dominican Republic.

Thank you.